

# **A ROLL-TO-ROLL PROCESS FOR FABRICATING PASSIVE MATRIX PLASTIC DISPLAYS**

## **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

### **1. Field of the Invention**

5        The present invention relates to a roll-to-roll process for fabricating flexible plastic displays, and more particularly, to a roll-to-roll process for fabricating passive matrix plastic displays.

### **2. Description of Related Art**

10      The flexible plastic displays have unique advantages of high impact resistance, lightweight and flexibility. In addition to potentialities of applications in the newly emerging markets for electronic paper, electronic tag, credit card, scrolling display and electronic advertisement board, an opportunity for being associated with the potable products exist. This marketplace is currently noticeable.

15      Passive displays fabricated by the conventional process need to go through steps of film deposition, photolithography, and etching. Also, the apparatuses for manufacturing passive displays are expensive, and the costs of research and development in this field of technology as well as fabrication are high. Furthermore, the known process is not a continuous process, which is hard to provide obvious increase in the yield. As a result, the price and the cost cannot be reduced on a large scale for wide-spreading the application of the plastic displays.

20      To accelerate the wide application of the plastic displays in the low-end products, a roll-to-roll process for continuously fabricating passive

plastic displays at lower fabrication cost, arising from flexibility of the plastics, is conceived. It is therefore desirable to provide a roll-to-roll process for fabricating passive plastic displays to mitigate and/or obviate the aforementioned problems.

5 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The primary object of the present invention is to provide a process for fabricating passive matrix plastic displays so as to use flexibility of the plastics for forming top and bottom substrate electrodes respectively by coating in a continuous roll-to-roll manner and to coat a polymeric liquid crystal without spending time in the liquid crystal filling. Hence, the process is simplified, the fabrication cost is reduced, and the application of the plastic displays in the low-end products is accelerated.

To attain the aforesaid object, a process for fabricating passive matrix plastic displays comprises the following steps: forming a plurality of 15 second conducting lines over a second plastic substrate with a roll-to-roll coating machine, wherein the second conducting lines are disposed perpendicular to the transportation direction of the second plastic substrate; continuously coating a polymeric liquid crystal over the second plastic substrate to form a plurality of block-shaped active areas; hollowing or 20 drilling the portions of the plastic substrate outside the block-shaped active areas mounted on the second plastic substrate with a cutting machine; providing a first plastic substrate having a plurality of first conducting lines disposed parallel to one another to have the first and the second plastic substrates mounted on a roll-to-roll coating machine simultaneously,

wherein the first conducting lines of the first plastic substrate are disposed parallel to the transportation direction of the first plastic substrate; and sealing the first and the second plastic substrates with an adhesive to form a plurality of passive matrix plastic display panels.

5 A process for fabricating passive matrix plastic displays according to the present invention comprises fabrication of a second plastic substrate and seal of a first plastic substrate and the second plastic substrate. The process for fabricating the first plastic substrate is not specifically defined, and can be achieved by a roll-to-roll coating machine. When a first 10 conducting line is a transparent electrode, a second conducting line is formed of a metallic adhesive (or adhesives containing metal particles). On the contrary, when the first conducting line is made of a metallic adhesive (or adhesives containing metal particles), the second conducting line is a transparent electrode. Alternatively, both the first and the second 15 conducting lines can be transparent electrodes. Preferably, the transparent electrode is made of a conductive polymer to improve stability of coating. Generally, the metallic adhesive is consisted of a metallic powder and a resin. Preferably, the metallic powder is a silver powder, an aluminum powder or a copper powder. In fabricating the first plastic substrate (which 20 normally is the bottom substrate of the display), a plurality of first conducting lines disposed parallel to one another are continuously formed over the first plastic substrate with a roll-to-roll coating machine. The first conducting lines are preferably formed by means of a dispenser or a die for screen-printing, stamping or coating, being disposed parallel to the

transportation direction of the first plastic substrate. Preferably, there is an ultraviolet-radiation or a heat-drying machine for curing or hardening the first conducting lines after the first conducting lines are formed to save the space occupied by the roll-to-roll coating machine. Then, the first plastic

5 substrate is rolled up to become a coil.

In fabricating the second plastic substrate (which normally is the top substrate of the display), a plurality of second conducting lines disposed parallel to one another are sequentially formed over the second plastic substrate with a roll-to-roll coating machine. The second conducting lines disposed perpendicular to the transportation direction of the second plastic substrate are preferably formed by means of a dispenser or a die for screen printing, stamping or coating. Preferably, there is an ultraviolet-radiation or a heat-drying machine for curing or hardening the second conducting lines after the second conducting lines are formed to save the space occupied by

10 the roll-to-roll coating machine. Then, a polymeric liquid crystal is coated continuously over the second plastic substrate to form a plurality of block-shaped active areas, and preferably, it is made by the slot-die coating technology. Finally, the portions of the plastic substrate outside the block-shaped active areas become hollow with a cutting machine.

15 Preferably, each of the hollow portions is of rectangular shape, having a width (the length of the portion perpendicular to the transportation direction of the second plastic substrate) which is shorter than the width of the second plastic substrate to prevent the second plastic substrate from cracking during transportation and is longer than the width of every block-shaped

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active area perpendicular to the transportation direction of the second plastic substrate to expose every stripe-shaped electrode of the first conducting lines after the top and the bottom substrates are sealed for being adapted to a driving circuit to be assembled. Then, the plastic substrate is 5 rolled up to become a coil, and the fabrication of the second plastic substrate is completed.

In sealing the first and the second plastic substrates, the first and the second plastic substrates are transported with a roll-to-roll coating machine, and are bound together with an adhesive. The adhesive is coated over either 10 the first plastic substrate or the second plastic substrate. Preferably, the adhesive is coated over the second plastic substrate, having an adhesion area larger in dimension than the block-shaped active area so that the adhesive does not cover the first conducting lines after the seal. The adhesive is coated preferably by the slot-die coating technology. It is 15 preferable to add an ultraviolet- or a hot- drying machine for hardening the adhesive after the seal to save the space occupied by the roll-to-roll coating machine. A cutting machine is preferably added after drying the adhesive to cut the plurality of active areas into a plurality of passive matrix plastic display panels.

20 The present invention adopts top and bottom substrates of different widths and the hollowing or drilling technique to expose the conducting lines for being adapted to a driving circuit to be assembled. The width of the first plastic substrate is shorter than the width of the second plastic substrate. When the top and the bottom substrates are sealed, the first

plastic substrate is aligned with the second plastic substrate on one side thereof. As such, the second conducting lines are exposed outside the first plastic substrate, being perpendicular to the first conducting lines. To apply a uniform tension to the plastic substrate to be stably movable in the 5 horizontal direction, the roll-to-roll coating machine generally is positioned in front of the plastic substrate being rolled up and behind the plastic substrate being unwound and straightened.

The fabrication of the plastic displays according to the present invention has been changed from non-continuous and high-cost to 10 continuous and low-cost. To develop a process more suitable for the coating treatment, the present invention replaces ITO and the conventional liquid crystals with a conductive polymer and a polymeric liquid crystal.

According to the present invention, the process for sealing the first plastic substrate and the second plastic substrate can be made by means of 15 either one roll-to-roll coating machine in a continuous manner or different roll-to-roll coating machines.

Other objects, advantages, and novel features of the invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

## 20 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a schematic view of a bottom substrate of a preferred embodiment according to the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic view of a top substrate of a preferred embodiment according to the present invention; and

Fig. 3 is a schematic view of a sealed top and bottom substrates of a preferred embodiment according to the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference to fig. 1, a process for fabricating a bottom substrate of a passive matrix plastic display according to the preferred embodiment adopts a roll-to-roll machine 10 on which a first plastic substrate 20 is straightened by means of two rollers 11 mounted for transporting the first plastic substrate, the two rollers being positioned in front of the first plastic substrate 20 being rolled up and first conducting lines 30 to be continuously formed parallel to one another by means of a dispenser 40 respectively. The first conducting lines 30 are disposed parallel to the transportation direction of the first plastic substrate 20, and are made of an aluminum adhesive. Then, the first conducting lines 30 are hardened by means of a heat-drying (or hot-drying) machine 50. The first plastic substrate 20 is rolled up to complete the fabrication of the bottom substrate.

With reference to fig. 2, a process for fabricating a top substrate of a passive matrix plastic display according to the preferred embodiment adopts a roll-to-roll machine 60 on which a second plastic substrate 70 is straightened by means of two rollers 61 mounted for transporting the second plastic substrate, the two rollers being positioned in front of the second plastic substrate 70 being rolled up and second conducting lines 80 to be formed parallel to one another by means of a dispenser 90 respectively. The second conducting lines 80 are disposed perpendicular to the transportation direction of the second plastic substrate, and are made of a

transparent conductive polymer. Then, the second conducting lines 80 are hardened by means of a hot-drying machine 120. A polymeric liquid crystal is coated over the second plastic substrate 70 by means of a slot-die 100 to form a plurality of block-shaped active areas 110. The portions of the 5 second plastic substrate 70 outside the block-shaped active areas become hollow by means of a cutting machine 130 to form a hollow area 140. The second plastic substrate 70 is rolled up to complete the fabrication of the top substrate.

With reference to fig. 3, a process for sealing the top and bottom 10 substrates of a passive matrix plastic display adopts a roll-to-roll coating machine 150 with two rollers 151 for driving the top substrate 160 and the bottom substrate 170 being aligned with the top substrate 160 on one side thereof. An adhesive 181 is coated over the top substrate 160 by means of a slot-die 180 to form an adhesion area 182. The top and bottom substrates 15 160, 170 are sealed. The adhesive 181 is hardened by means of a hot-drying machine 190. Finally, a cutting machine 200 is employed to form a plurality of passive matrix plastic display panels 210.

In the preferred embodiment, the width of the first plastic substrate 20 is shorter than the width of the second plastic substrate 70 so that the 20 second conducting lines 80 formed on the second plastic substrate 70 are exposed after the seal for being adapted to a driving circuit to be assembled. In the fabrication of the top substrate 160, each of the hollow portions formed with the cutting machine 130 is of rectangular shape, having a width (the length of the portion perpendicular to the transportation direction of the

second plastic substrate70) which is shorter than the width of the second plastic substrate 70 to prevent the second plastic substrate 70 from cracking during transportation and is longer than the width of every block-shaped active area 110 perpendicular to the transportation direction of the second 5 plastic substrate 70 to expose the first conducting lines 30 after the top and the bottom substrates are sealed for being adapted to a driving circuit to be assembled.

In the preferred embodiment, the fabrication of a passive matrix plastic display is simply achieved by means of a roll-to-roll coating 10 machine having a plurality of rollers, a cutting machine, a hot-drying machine and two coating dies. The fabrication cost is greatly reduced, as compared with the conventional process for fabricating the plastic displays which further requires a machine for depositing a metal film, an etching machine, a photolithographic machine and an apparatus for the liquid 15 crystal filling. Furthermore, due to the continuous process the yield is increased. In addition, the coating of a polymeric liquid crystal saves the time for the liquid crystal filling and avoids deflection caused by the flow of the liquid crystal as being bent.

Although the present invention has been explained in relation to its 20 preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that many other possible modifications and variations can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as hereinafter claimed.